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Rural poverty was deepened rather than ameliorted by a revolution in Southern agriculture. There were 3.4 million Southern farmers in 1935; this number decreased to less than 1.6 million in 1962. Average yearly earnings were less than $2,500.

The Rural Areas Development program has tried to attract industry to county or multi-county areas in which surplus agricultural labor could be employed. Such agencies as the Soil Conservation Service, the Extension Service, and the Employment Service have cooperated with local development committees. The Area Redevelopment Administration has carried out the Depressed Areas program; areas were classified according to the unemployment rate and, if rural, according to family income. Loans have been available for private projects which would benefit the economy, and for public works.

A better life for farm families should include improvements in the areas of economic opportunity, education, organization, and civil rights.

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A BETTER LIFE *for* FARM FAMILIES

a report on a southern rural conference sponsored by

FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF ALL AGRICULTURAL LABOR

NSF

SINCE 1937

NATIONAL SHARECROPPERS FUND

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FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF ALL AGRICULTURAL LABOR

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SINCE 1937

NATIONAL SHARECROPPERS FUND

The National Sharecroppers Fund is a non-profit, voluntary organization which has worked for over twenty-five years to bring economic and social justice to Southern sharecroppers, tenant farmers, and other low-income farm families. NSF also cooperates with other groups to improve conditions for all American farm workers, including migratory farm laborers and their families.

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A BETTER LIFE *for* FARM FAMILIES*

INTRODUCTION

Mississippi sharecroppers came to the National Sharecroppers Fund's rural conference at Franklinton Center, Bricks, North Carolina. So did an Assistant Secretary of Agriculture. The cross-section of Americans who participated ranged from rural ministers and local development leaders to leaders of national church, labor, and civic organizations and federal government agencies; from teachers in backwoods primary schools to professors at leading universities. Yet this diversity led to the fulfillment of one of the conference's major goals: a genuine two-way dialogue between public officials responsible for bringing the government's resources to bear on rural poverty in the South, and people who, having lived with poverty and discrimination all their lives, were now looking forward toward a better life.

We participants were unified by a common desire for rural progress, and all of us had something to learn. The farmers and rural leaders wanted to know how they could continue in farming and earn a decent living under the new conditions of the agricultural revolution. Government and private agency officials wanted to know whether their programs were reaching the people for whom they were meant, and if not, why not? What, they asked, was necessary to bridge the gap between public policy and actual benefits to the people who need them most?

The farmers learned that there were men in government who cared about their problems and that programs that could help solve these problems existed. The government officials, on the other hand, learned that enunciation of policy was not enough, that a better life for low-income farm families in the South required that they follow through with action right down to sharecroppers' level.

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*A report on the proceedings of the National Sharecroppers Fund Southern Rural Conference held at Franklinton Center, Bricks, North Carolina, November 14-16, 1962.

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In this report, we have attempted to summarize the speeches and discussions that took place at the conference and to give some of the exciting flavor that sparked most sessions. We wish that it were possible to recreate the spirit that the participants gave to the proceedings: the sharp controversy, the signs of hope and understanding, and finally, the unified atmosphere in which the conference closed. As he was leaving Franklinton Center, one of the participants, a priest from rural Louisiana, said, "These may have been the three most important days in my life." In publishing this report, we hope to be able to recall this spirit for those who attended, and, even more important, to recreate it for those who were unable to be there.

Following the agenda of the conference as the outline of this report, introducing the speakers, their organizations, the programs and the problems as they appeared, we hope to share with you the lively sense of purpose and the down-to-earth reality of the proceedings.

It will appear to the reader of this report who did not attend the conference that certain questions arise and are not answered; that in some sessions problems and controversies draw out contradictory opinions rather than solutions. This is true. How far to try to work through an uncooperative power structure, and where to oppose it; how to employ Negroes fully without furthering segregated industries and other discriminatory practices; how to prevent economic progress from becoming lost in the civil rights struggle—some discussions may seem to end in the middle. They did.

That is because conferences do not solve problems. They clarify them and forge tools. To judge the degree to which the conference reached its objective, it is not enough to describe its atmosphere or its participants. In fact, its value must be measured from a future vantage point in terms of whether it will have helped rural families in the South to greater economic stability and social dignity; whether it will have helped stem the uprooting and continuing misery of thousands of families now forced to leave the rural South for a precarious existence in city slums. A conference can supply tools for the job and, hopefully, the dedication to use them. But in the long run it is up to us to use these tools to help build a better life for farm families.

FAY BENNETT
Executive Secretary
National Sharecroppers Fund

February, 1963

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WELCOME

"Justice, compassion, brotherhood . . ."

Rural poverty deepened rather than ameliorated by a revolution in Southern agriculture was the contradiction put before conference participants by Dr. Frank Graham, National Sharecroppers Fund Chairman, in his welcoming address, presented by Fay Bennett in Dr. Graham's absence because of illness.

> "Automation, mechanization, increasing farm production with less and less farm workers, the migration of farm families from the farms to the industrial centers and the slums of the great cities—all these add to the educational, economic, social, and political problems of the region and the nation. . . . The plight of low-income farm workers is on the agenda of the unfinished fulfillment of the faith and hopes of the great American revolutionary declarations for the equal freedom, dignity, and opportunity of all people."

The 3.4 million Southern farmers of 1935 have dropped to less than 1.6 million today, Dr. Graham pointed out, and these remaining farmers, except for a handful of large producers, are earning less than $2,500 a year. In the decade of the fifties, more than four million persons were forced to leave the rural South: 1.5 million of them were Negroes who migrated to the North to search for employment in a labor market already under heavy pressure from automation. Since most of these migrants did not have the benefits of decent education and training in industrial skills, their chances for gainful employment were slight.

The National Sharecroppers Fund in this conference has been able to bring together those whose lives are torn by these problems and those who represent the nation's responsibility for solving them. Expressing his great hopes for its success, Dr. Graham noted:

> "The death of the greatest woman of our time, Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt, reminds us in this conference to carry on in her spirit for all people in need of the justice, compassion, and brotherhood to which she gave her life and will forever give her immortal spirit."

November, 1963 - Gift of A.M. Potts

KEYNOTE

"We are ready for another plowing . . ."

Dr. Lewis W. Jones of the Race Relations Department of Fisk University, Nashville, Tennessee, set the tone of the conference as he recalled his early years on a cotton farm in Texas: "It is not uncommon that a crop has to be plowed many more times than expected before human duty is done to insure fruition. Then, after man has done his utmost, wind and weather may still defeat him." Similarly, there have been previous unavailing federal efforts to help the small Southern farmer realize a decent and secure livelihood.

> "Now, we are ready for another plowing. Some of us literally are back in roles we have played before; others are newly come to play familiar roles as the good guys, bad guys, bit part players, and by-standers in the drama of securing a better life for small farmers. We were here thirty years ago when the cards were being shuffled for the New Deal. When the cards had been played and the deal went down we went out having lost our reform shirts. We are back, this time on the New Frontier, outfitted and with a grub-stake to transform a social wilderness. How well we do will depend in a measure on the social and economic weather beyond our influence. In part, how well we do will depend upon us. As I look into the faces of veterans of the New Deal, I wonder if the same will be said of them on the Frontier as might have been said of them in the 1930's: 'They meant well but too feebly.' "

"The people were not planned for," Dr. Jones stated, in describing his experiences with TVA, tenant-farmer, and other programs. However well-intentioned were the officials responsible for New Deal programs, their actions did not reach the people who needed them most.

"Is it not possible to plan for people, to plan with them, building into the plan their dreams and hopes? Those who say not will usually be found to have a plan: a plan of greed and avarice and exploitation that will carefully ensure plenty to a cunning few."

> "This conference will serve notice to the people responsible for administration of the new farm program that we propose literally to haunt them to keep them meaning well in the spirit of the program and doing more than feebly carrying out its letter. A highly placed public official said to a few of us in Washington: 'Keep after us and don't let up; we are going to do what you push us to do.' It is my hope that participants in this conference will become the nuclei in many communities of knowledgeable groups of citizens committed to persistent and insistent action."

The conference was warned that pressure on the federal government would not be enough; an even greater problem lies in opposition on the local level. The same kinds of people, from governors to county extension agents, who controverted federal programs in the rural South during the thirties are doing it today, he said. To overcome this local opposition, local groups must be equipped with knowledge of the programs' procedures and be vigilant to insure their implementation at the grass roots.

Knowledge

"The well-informed citizen needs to have a clear understanding of what an agency or a program can do. It is futile to ask the representative of any agency for a service it is not empowered by law to give. On the other hand, citizens may insist that it render the service it is responsible for giving. Legislation may be secured to provide a neglected service when needed."

Representation

"Committee representation is a critical factor in the equitable administration of programs for rural people. The glaring inequity is to be seen in the case of the Negro, but I consider the Negro's situation to be representative of that of the small farmer, only a *more so* condition of disadvantage."

> "Until now these committees have never been any more representative than the governments of the South have been. They started off badly when the county agents appointed the first committees under the AAA. Until the Kennedy administration there was not a single Negro on one of the 3,000 Farmers Home Administration Committees. Is there one now? We can profitably discuss insuring that there are candidates representative of the small farmers where the committees are elective. But where the committees are appointive, how may there be effective pressure for representation of the small farmers?"

"Let us look at the situation at the local level," Dr. Jones continued. "There are two interlocking structures in any county—the bureaucratic and the political. The paid agency representative at the local level is a professional or technical person in the bureaucratic structure. He must follow the directives of the agency as they come from the national office through the state office. The committeeman is representative of the political structure influencing policy at the local level.

Lewis W. Jones
Keynote Speaker

"I was in a county agent's office recently; the agent wanted to work with a special program of rural redevelopment and said he needed a specific directive from the upper echelon of his agency to offset the opposition of his advisory committee in the county, whose members were segregationists and reactionaries."

> "Too great care cannot be exercized in getting a representative committee. The people themselves can choose their leaders to represent them. No man in a national, state, or county office can decide who the leaders of the people are."

Qualified Negroes may not be available but they can be trained. The Negro schools of agriculture are not giving useful enough training. "Professor George Dowdy and I, several years ago, took announcements of Civil Service employment open in the Department of Agriculture and checked the educational qualifications required to fill them. Schools of agriculture for white young men in the South taught those courses. Schools for Negro young men did not."

Special training is the way out, and it has been done before. "Negro personnel for the Farm Security Administration was trained in a special training program developed cooperatively by Tuskegee Institute and Fisk University."

The facts of rural life

"Our concern here is not a selfish one. Its focus on the disadvantaged in rural areas is in terms of the national welfare as well as in terms of the well-being of the people involved. There is living space in the rural areas of the country, more healthful and wholesome living space than that of the crowded city slums into which people pushed off the land tend to gravitate."

The following statistics, drawn from the 1960 census, give some idea of the scope of the problems before us: There are one and one-half million people living in the rural areas in each of the three states of Alabama, Mississippi, and South Carolina. In Texas there are two million. Rural non-farm people make up the following percentages of the populations of these states: Alabama, 33%; Mississippi, 37%; South Carolina, 44%; and Texas, 18%. The percentages of the populations that are farm people are: Alabama, 12%; Mississippi, 25%; South Carolina, 15%; and Texas, 7%.

> "These rural people are poor. More than 80 per cent of the non-white rural people in each and all of the states had annual family incomes of less than $3,000. More than 40 per cent had incomes of less than $1,000. The rural white families were somewhat better off. The percentage of white rural non-farm families who had incomes of less than $3,000 ranged from 39 per cent in South Carolina to 47 per cent in Alabama. The range for white farm families was from 49 per cent in South Carolina to 60 per cent in Alabama. The percentages of white farm families whose incomes were less than $1,000 were 16 per cent in South Carolina and 20 per cent in Mississippi.

> "Not only are they poor, they are also uneducated. The median school grade completed for rural Negroes of 25 years and older in Alabama, Mississippi, and South Carolina was between 5 and 6 years; in Texas, 8 years. Rural white persons 25 years old and older had completed less than 9 years in Alabama, less than 10 years in Mississippi, and less than 11 years in South Carolina and Texas."

"These figures underscore our previous statement that the rural problem is not what it was a generation ago. Between 1930 and 1960 the number of farms in these states decreased 45 per cent or more. Farms of 500 acres or larger increased by the following percentages: Alabama, 147%; Mississippi, 174%; South Carolina, 85%; and Texas, 67%. Despite the fact that tenant farms decreased by more than one-half in all of these states, there were still tenants and still sharecroppers. The percentages of sharecroppers out of all tenants were: Alabama, 27%; Mississippi, 51%; South Carolina, 44%; and Texas, 7%. Negroes make up a little more than half of all sharecroppers in Alabama, 80 per cent of them in South Carolina, and 90 per cent in Mississippi.

"As to farms enumerated in 1959, 7% in Texas, 17% in South Carolina, 21% in Alabama, and 24% in Mississippi were Class VI Farms (those whose annual value of products was less than $2,500). In Class VIII Farms (those whose operators were 65 years old or over) the percentages were: Texas and South Carolina, 13%, and Mississippi and Alabama, 15%. The Part-Time Farm (Census Class VII) is not necessarily or even usually a problem farm, but there are problem farms in this category. The percentages of Part-Time Farms out of all farms in the states were: Texas, 26%; Mississippi, 31%; South Carolina, 32%; Alabama, 35%. The combined percentages of all farms in these categories were: Alabama, 71%; Mississippi, 71%; South Carolina, 63%; and Texas 47%."

In closing, Dr. Jones said: "To those who would hurl the epithet 'bleeding heart' at me I reply, 'That is not an epithet.' I am proud to have a heart and want to be counted apart from those who measure men in acres and bushels and bales. We are concerned with people—individuals, families, and neighborhoods."

> "We are come together as concerned people who want to equip ourselves to serve other people who need help. We must take the pressures of Southern politicians off of public servants in agencies. We must put pressure on public servants who cannot or do not serve. We must have people who need help understand how they can help themselves and dispel any illusions that they can escape planning, working, and investing their financial resources, however meager. In the degree to which we do this we will service the basic national economy and the higher patriotism, and show man's greater humanity to man. We cannot do this if we mean well, but too feebly."

RURAL AREAS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

"Democratic government is responsive . . ."

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's RAD program attempts to attract industry to county or multi-county areas in which surplus agricultural labor can be employed. Agencies such as the Soil Conservation Service, the Extension Service, Farmers Home Administration, Rural Electrification Administration, and the Employment Service cooperate with local development committees.

Federal aid programs such as the Farmers Home Administration loans for purchasing and operating a family-size farm, and indeed the entire package of RAD technical and financial assistance, can only help those who are willing to help themselves—this was the message of Dr. A. T. Mace, Director of the Office of Rural Areas Development, in introducing the panel discussion of RAD. He recalled Assistant Secretary of Agriculture John Baker's words that "economic development must start first with the local people. That is the key to success of local area development."

> "The felt needs of you people who live on the land," Dr. Mace continued, "you mothers and fathers, your children and their children, and your parents as well, must of necessity provide the motivating force behind any successful economic development. Remember this—democratic government is responsive to your wishes, your desires, your needs, but democratic government is neither compulsive or demanding."

Noting the progress RAD has made in only a year and a half, Dr. Mace announced that there were now active local committees in 1,600 counties, and that they have submitted some 2,700 economic development projects to date. A total of 317 have already been approved, involving more than $90 million and producing 45,000 new jobs in depressed rural areas. Most of this progress, according to Dr. Mace, is due to the industrial and public works loans of the Area Redevelopment Administration, which the RAD office administers in rural areas.

Harry Bass, Assistant to the Director of Rural Areas Development, discussed the problem resulting from the exclusion of Negroes from participation in RAD programs in the rural South. The conference had already heard Dr. Jones and Dr. Graham present statistics that show

the large numbers of Negroes who need the benefits, he pointed out. But when we consider the $90 million already spent on RAD, it should be understood that very few, if any, of the new industrial projects in the rural South are actually benefiting Negroes: "Negroes are not at the policy-making level for one penny of that money."

Mr. Bass arrived in Washington with the new administration. He had the idea that the New Frontier would change things, but now he wasn't so sure, because it looked as if RAD was following the same pattern that made the older federal programs fail to meet the challenge of rural poverty.

Three factors are crucial to real success of the RAD program, Mr. Bass said: climate, communication, and cooperation. Climate includes the conditions under which RAD must operate. In the South, this climate is usually a product of two different sets of social mores: first, those of the white power structure which tries to maintain its privileged position and supports the status quo, and second, those of the Negro people who today are demanding a change. To bridge this gap, we need communication, both between the races and between the federal government and the people—not just the power structure of both races. For example, Mr. Bass related, RAD has published much literature about its programs, but somehow it never seems to reach the people for whom the programs are actually intended. He recalled a recent visit with the head of Negro Extension in Arkansas, who told him he had been "too busy" to work on RAD programs. This condition, he said, is common throughout the rural South.

> Often Negro officials tell their white administrators what they want to hear —not the truth. It is our job to make sure the people know the truth, and to make sure that individuals at the local level know the programs and push for them.

But at the same time, progress will depend on cooperation between the races at the local level. Washington has shown its recognition of this by the appointment of L. A. Potts, Dean of the School of Agriculture at Tuskegee Institute, to develop ideas on how such cooperation can be made effective. The Negro is willing to go part of the way, but the white leadership must meet them, Mr. Bass insisted. As the events at the University of Mississippi show, "the day of the New Negro is here."

When Secretary Baker talked to a group of Negro agricultural workers at Tuskegee recently, he held up a dollar bill and a pencil. The dollar bill symbolized the financial help the rural Southerner needs to end poverty, and the pencil represented the right to vote that must be won if federal officials are to heed his power at the polls.

"Information and assistance . . ."

The Technical Action Panels (TAPs) which RAD is establishing in rural counties were described by John M. Lovorn, Director of the Rural Renewal Division of FHA. Mr. Lovorn opened his discussion by

saying that he was proud to be a member of the Farmers Home Administration, which came into being because it had a concern for *people*, and because it is one of the major programs that RAD is trying to bring to the disadvantaged people of the rural South.

> If disadvantaged people have not fully benefited from federal programs in the past, he said—and the charge is essentially correct—then those who administer these programs are responsible. He asked to be personally informed of any experiences of the denial of rightful benefits under federal programs such as FHA loans, with *specific* details about the events. [Mr. Lavorn's address is Farmers Home Administration, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington 25, D.C.]

TAP's primary purpose is to provide information and assistance to local rural development groups, Mr. Lovorn explained. The TAPs are farm family representatives. "They have a concern for *your* problems."

They are composed of representatives of the various federal and state agencies and have three primary responsibilities:

1. assist in the preparation of Overall Economic Development Programs by local groups;
2. help local groups secure project financing assistance from other federal agencies such as the Area Redevelopment Administration; and
3. coordinate the services that its agencies offer, such as housing loans, recreation loans, watershed loans, soil conservation technical assistance, and regular FHA loans.

Mr. Lovorn thought that many rural people might be unaware that FHA can now make special 4 per cent interest housing loans in small towns and for the elderly. That is another function of the local county TAPs: to help spread information and to answer your questions. If you have any questions, go there first. The FHA realizes that most rural leaders are not engineers, economists, or factory location experts.

Mr. Lovorn emphasized that important changes were taking place in the rural South. When farms become larger and more mechanized, farmers need much more technical knowledge and capital than in the days of the "40 acres and a mule"—days which no one of us would like to see return, he pointed out. The Farmers Home Administration cannot support unsound farming, but experience has shown that many small farms can be helped, both technically and financially, to become successful enterprises providing a decent standard of living for the farmer and his family. And it is the small farms that FHA was established to help—those farms which cannot get private loans.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture supports the family farm. "We will not promote programs that will eliminate family farms"—such as those of the Committee for Economic Development whose effect

is to drive farmers off the land. The TAPs are under direction to represent this policy at the local level. In some areas TAPs are operating effectively, in some they are ineffective, and in others they are inactive. But the full weight of the Department of Agriculture, from the Secretary on down, is behind them. "We in USDA are taking a new look in a new direction," Mr. Lovorn closed by saying; "there has been substantial progress in the past year, but we are confident that there will be even greater gains in 1963."

"The small farmer needs help . . ."

Job K. Savage of the Farmer Cooperative Service was born in the county where Franklinton Center is located and was especially pleased to return for the conference. He spoke on problems, progress, and recommendations for low-income farmers.

Mr. Savage suggested that a variety of factors contribute to the low level of farm incomes, among them:

1. lack of sufficient volume of a uniform, graded, quality product;
2. lack of knowledge of market supply and demand conditions;
3. lack of facilities to grade, pack, and present products for sale;
4. lack of capital and credit for mechanized equipment and expansion;
5. lack of business "know-how" to manage and use land and labor to the greatest advantage;
6. lack of organization and cooperation among small, low-income farmers;
7. *underemployment* during that part of the year when the farmer is actually planting, cultivating, and harvesting his crops, and virtual *unemployment* during the rest of the year.

"In brief, the small farmer—whether he is a wage hand, sharecropper, or operator—needs help in the form of additional employment, credit, and management advice and guidance."

Ways in which these farmers could increase their incomes, Mr. Savage indicated, might include planting of different crops, perhaps on land not now being used; shifting from lower to higher profit crops, such as fruits, vegetables, and nuts; joint ownership of machinery and farm equipment; and cooperative marketing enterprises.

Since even improved farming will not solve all income problems of rural areas, Mr. Savage emphasized that it is necessary to look also to off-farm solutions. Among prospects for off-farm employment for rural Southerners, he mentioned wood processing enterprises; commercial recreational facilities; roadside markets for specialty products of the area; and motels and restaurants in some areas. Rural credit unions offer another means of improving the financial security of rural people.

The Chesterfield County Garment Corporation of Pageland, South Carolina, is an example of new industrial employment opportunity for Negroes. This all-Negro group of 75 local residents bought an old school building and raised a total of $16,000. A white-led company, the Pageland Manufacturing Company, will provide management and training, and will purchase the entire output of slacks and shorts from the Negro plant. An application for Area Redevelopment Administration financing will be made, and 100 jobs are expected to be available by the end of the first year. A similar project to employ 50 Negro sewing-machine operators is under way in Clinton, North Carolina. Mr. Savage said that in presenting this report on all-Negro enterprises, he was not advocating "separate but equal facilities," but that these projects represent a start in providing jobs that are so badly needed by Negroes who cannot remain on the land.

After re-emphasizing the need for training and retraining programs in order for Negroes to take advantage of the industrial jobs that will be opening up, Mr. Savage closed with a brief account of the work of his agency, the Farmer Cooperative Service. It conducts research studies and service activities to aid farmers in connection with cooperatives for marketing farm products, purchasing farm supplies, and supplying business services, and it tries to inform low-income farmers of the advantages of working together to solve their economic problems.

AREA REDEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION

"One-fifth of all non-white Americans . . ."

The Area Redevelopment Administration, under the Department of Commerce, carries out the Depressed Areas program. An area is classified according to the unemployment rate and, if rural, family income. Loans are available for up to 65 per cent of the cost of private projects that would benefit the economy and for public works. Lesser amounts are available as grants for retraining workers and for subsistence allowances while they are in training, and for feasibility studies.

ARA specialists who participated in the panel discussion included Wayne Shields, Southeast Area Senior Coordinator; Anne Gould, Training Coordinator, and George H. Robinson, Special Assistant for Community Organization.

Responsibility for encouraging, assisting, and administering the ARA program in rural areas has been delegated to the Department of Agriculture, Mr. Shields reported, although final approval must come from the ARA itself under the Department of Commerce.

Standards for determining a rural area's eligibility include:

1. median family income one-third or less of the national, or $1560;
2. median farm family income one-fourth or less of the national farm family, or $1156;

3. at least 60 per cent of the area's commercial farms in Class VI, that is, with annual sales less than $2500.

Training programs

Between 11,000 and 12,000 persons are either now being trained or have completed training or retraining under the ARA program, according to Miss Gould, although many eligible areas have not yet asked for this assistance. Job placement for such workers has been at a 65 per cent rate, and trainees have received preparation for a wide variety of jobs throughout the country. Miss Gould outlined the steps in setting up a training program:

1. After being designated eligible for ARA assistance, a redevelopment area must draw up an Overall Economic Development Program which includes an outline of its needs and its plans for a training program.
2. The local Employment Service must certify that there are job openings for which no skilled workers can be found locally.
3. The vocational training department of the state board of education is then asked to establish a training program for particular skills.
4. The local ARA committee is consulted throughout, and local, state, and federal agencies must approve the training program.
5. Unemployed workers, including farm workers whose annual income is less than $1,200, may then apply at the Employment Service office for participation in the program and for a subsistence allowance for up to 16 weeks.

Although the present 16-week limit on the subsistence allowance limits the types of jobs for which training programs may be set up, ARA has been able to train workers for industrial, white-collar, and service trades employment. As an example, Miss Gould cited a project for training between 300 and 400 migrant farm workers in Laredo, Texas, for permanent jobs in the area.

One major obstacle that must be faced was explained by Miss Gould. We want everyone, she said, regardless of race, placed in new jobs that will enable them to live decently. But for uneducated rural people, one major obstacle to their acceptance in retraining programs is their lack of basic education. In general, only literate workers with enough background to learn quickly can be trained. However, in several areas ARA is investigating the possibility of general training for workers whose backgrounds are such as to prevent their eligibility for more advanced training programs.

"The unfilled job and the unemployed worker live unhappily side by side," Miss Gould stated; the ARA training programs provide one approach toward remedying this situation.

Eligibility

One-fifth of all non-white Americans (four million people) live in depressed areas that are eligible for ARA assistance, Mr. Robinson reported. The proportion, however, varies widely from New York, where Negroes constitute 9 per cent of the state's population, but only 1.3 per cent of the population of its depressed areas, to Texas, where 12 per cent of the population is Negro, but 24 per cent of the population in depressed areas is non-white.

In many areas, the low income of Negroes makes counties eligible for ARA assistance, Mr. Robinson noted. As an example, he cited Green County, Alabama. There the 1950 average annual income of white families was $2,176, but of Negro families, only $383. Since the maximum average family income for ARA eligibility in rural areas is about $1,560, the low income of Negro families makes Green County eligible for federal aid. Similarly, in LeFlore County, Mississippi, white families average $2,784 a year, while Negroes earn $595. For the state of South Carolina, income levels are: white: $2,083; Negro, $539.

Mr. Robinson emphasized that it is Negro unemployment and underemployment that qualify many counties for ARA aid, but we all know that if something isn't done by people who are concerned, jobs will not go to Negroes in many of these areas. ARA has provided some jobs for Negroes, mainly in the North, but not nearly enough. At the same time, ARA does not want to establish a segregated factory system in the South, which is what all-Negro projects might lead to. "ARA believes that all jobs should be open to qualified workers regardless of race."

FROM THE FLOOR

The discussion which followed the panel presentations of the RAD and ARA programs was both lengthy and spirited.

Control

The greatest difficulty in bringing federal aid to low-income farm families is local control, a Louisiana priest reported on the basis of his experience.

> In his [southern] area of the state, "local leadership" means people with vested interests—vested interests in low wages, little competition, and tight political control by a small group of white businessmen who get themselves elected parish [county] officials and town mayors. How can we overcome this obstacle, he asked, and make the RAD and ARA programs *work* as they were intended to work?

He pointed out that one-third of the population in his area of the state were Negroes, and that, as far as he knew, none were represented on local committees.

Representation

All local ARA committees and the Overall Economic Development Programs they draw up must be representative of all occupational and interest groups in their areas, the ARA area coordinator replied. ARA has delegated responsibility for seeing that this requirement is carried out in rural areas to the Department of Agriculture, which in turn places responsibility for this on its Extension and FHA agencies. "We exercise control in Washington to the extent possible, and have turned down some Overall Economic Development Programs and projects because they were not representative," he said.

Initiative

The ARA's training coordinator stated that as far as she knew, no white man sat on a local committee in southern Louisiana either, because almost no projects have been received from any committee in Louisiana. "We cannot foist a program on a state; it is up to the local groups to work to implement federal programs."

The cross-discussion on local functioning continued:

> . . . The Department of Agriculture realizes that it is not easy for all groups to participate equally in the federal rural development programs.
>
> . . . We are trying to give special attention to this problem, but we need your help.
>
> . . . Established state and local agencies should not be by-passed by either local groups or the federal government. If RAD cannot function through these groups, then it cannot function at all.
>
> . . . Negro representation on local committees is not the crucial factor. Negro access to jobs is. It is easy for white leaders to appoint a few accommodating Negroes to committees as window-dressing, but this doesn't help the people we are trying to help.

"How can we begin?"

The question, again from the Louisianan, set off a new discussion How can we begin? To whom should we go in our communities?

Government representatives replied: the local county Extension Agent or the local TAP.

What if the agent does not know about RAD and ARA, or refuses to help? The question came from South Carolina.

The answer: We in Washington cannot and do not want to circumvent local agencies, but if you write to us, we can work with the local agencies and help them help you.

A representative from a religious service organization raised the problem of an apparent contradiction in federal policy: administration policy demands fair employment practices on the one hand, but on the other, funds are lent to businessmen who discriminate against employees who are Negroes. The federal government doesn't allow defense contractors to discriminate; why should it aid other businessmen who do?

An ARA spokesman replied that ARA doesn't care *who* is hired, but about *how many* are hired; it is concerned with creating new jobs first on a sound, businesslike basis. Discussion followed about possible all-Negro projects developing, as well as all-white. Pro and con points of view were expressed.

"To reach the people . . ."

Limitations on the participation of people who need the program do not necessarily stem from basic problems like control, discrimination, and power structure.

If we want to reach the people, we must talk their language and illustrate it with meaningful symbols, a religious organization representative commented. Almost all the literature describing these programs is written in technical and unclear language, it was pointed out.

A state government representative replied that this, too, was related to the necessity of working with the business community and government leaders.

Perhaps the reason that the material is not written for those with fourth-grade education is because ARA is not intended to be administered by them. Its purpose is to help the entrepreneur.

He added that one important reason why Negroes are not being retrained under ARA in the rural South is that when the preliminary survey of job availability is taken, employers state that they will not hire Negroes to fill their job openings. "It becomes a vicious circle," he said.

An Extension Service spokesman asked if retraining programs would allow Negroes to be trained in their home states for work in the North, where chances of finding employment are better. Out-migration from the rural South to the North is a great national problem, he pointed out, and it could be eased by providing migrants with the skills and education to better their lives in Northern industry.

A training specialist replied that this is theoretically possible, but that retrained workers would have to be assured of jobs in the states to which they were migrating. In response to a question about trade unions, she replied that so far there had been no problems encountered in having ARA trainees admitted to unions.

RURAL AMERICA—15 YEARS FROM NOW

". . . To reverse the economic forces . . ."

Dr. C. E. Bishop, Head of the Department of Agricultural Economics at North Carolina State College, spoke Wednesday evening on the theme, "Rural America—15 Years From Now."

The South has been especially affected by the rapid and far-reaching changes in the structure of the nation's agriculture, he said, since, as a region, it has been and still is most dependent on the farm sector of its economy. As farms grow both in terms of capital requirements and gross annual sales, and the small, marginal farm finds it increasingly difficult to survive, the South's share of the nation's remaining low-income farms grows proportionately.

"We have a real problem: to reverse the economic forces that are at work here giving us a higher proportion of low-income people, and to help the people get into the stream of progress so that they can partake of the fruits of the nation's economic growth."

Today the family farm, if it is to return a decent standard of living to its operator and his family, must sell about $10,000 worth of products each year, giving a net income of around $2,500. Dr. Bishop stressed that the $10,000 figure does not mean corporation farms are the wave of the future, but rather that family farms must achieve this level. Smaller farms which cannot take advantage of new techniques and machines are on the way out, in Dr. Bishop's judgment.

> Today at least 1.5 million young men between ten and nineteen are growing up on the nation's farms, but within the next decade there will be only 150,000 openings for farm operators. With expected increases in farm size through consolidation we shall need at least 1.6 million new non-farm jobs in the next ten years.

In the South, the rate of adjustment will be even more severe, since of the eight million farm people lost to migration in the past ten years, over half have come from the South alone. Dr. Bishop estimated that, depending on the economic health of the nation as a whole, there will

be another wave of migration totaling between 5.8 and 7.1 million persons in the sixties; projecting this to between 1960 and 1975, there will be a total migration out of farming of between 8.5 and 10 million people.

Noting the fact that it is primarily the young people who have been and will be migrating, Dr. Bishop stated that today there are more farm people in their sixties than in their twenties.

The people who will have the gravest problems fall into two groups: older persons, over forty-five, who for the most part cannot be retrained for other work, and who have no alternatives to staying on the farms; and those persons who will be migrating and who are not prepared to take up productive roles in our technological society. Dr. Bishop called these "the human tragedies being dumped on our cities."

Education

The most important thing we can do to soften the blow of changing jobs and homes, Dr. Bishop stressed, is to increase drastically our educational investment in our young people. Additional investment in education could be a powerful and dynamic force in agricultural adjustment. In illustration, Dr. Bishop pointed out that since we must assume continued migration for many years, upgrading Southern education would help change the disastrous situation where we send to the cities young people who are unskilled at a time when professional jobs are going begging for lack of trained personnel. Since other areas of the country would benefit from improved education of Southern young people, this makes a forceful argument for Southern states' accepting federal aid to education.

At the same time, with increased educational investment the South itself could attract more industry and more varied types of industry, since it would be able to ensure the availability of workers with enough basic education so they could be trained for skilled jobs. Changing the industrial composition of the South and increasing off-farm jobs is absolutely vital if we are to deal with the human problems created by the agricultural revolution.

Dr. Bishop believed that the best hope for the Negro to improve his condition lies in education, and he tied this prospect to the trends in the whole national economy. In our technological society, capital continues to become more plentiful, but there is an increasing shortage of skilled and professional workers to fill the kinds of jobs being created. He stressed the importance of doing everything possible to keep Negro young people in school, not only through high school, but in college and beyond.

> "We must invest in these people if we do not wish to perpetuate a situation in which we condemn a segment of our population to poverty for another generation," Dr. Bishop said. We should be prepared to triple

our present yearly expenditures for Southern education from about $3.2 billion today to $9.1 billion by 1975 to catch up with the more prosperous states—and we must do this from a position of lower total income. This means sacrifices, especially in terms of higher taxes, and it is not certain whether the South is ready to assume such a burden or whether it is ready to accept the federal aid to education which would be necessary. "But," Dr. Bishop closed, "can you show me any course which has more promise?"

From the floor

James M. Dabbs of South Carolina, president of the Southern Regional Council, and chairman of the evening session, led off the discussion, raising questions about the impact of the agricultural revolution on family farms.

Dr. Bishop pointed out that although family farms with sales of less than $2,500 a year have been hardest hit, those selling more than $10,000 worth of products annually have doubled in number between 1950 and 1960. He emphasized that while there will be fewer farms, the trend is toward more farms which can provide a reasonable living comparable to that of non-farm people—farms large enough to adopt modern methods, but where the family provides management and most of the labor. In his opinion, we should not try to preserve farms with a yearly income of less than $2,500.

Problems arising from segregated school systems in the South, and particularly the higher cost of such systems, were raised by several participants. Federal aid was necessary to the educational program envisaged by Dr. Bishop, but the large federal assistance necessary would not be forthcoming to support a dual educational system. The estimated investment of $9.1 billion given by Dr. Bishop was based, he said, on integrated school systems.

Returning to the discussion of revolutionary change in agriculture, participants pointed out that agricultural economists and others had predicted the current changes twenty and thirty years ago. But three successive federal administrations had failed to develop programs adequate to deal with them.

"I'm not sure we could visualize the real magnitude of the change that was going to be necessary," Dr. Bishop responded. Moreover, the people, and the farmers themselves, did not want to believe the predictions about the trends in agriculture.

One participant asked how the concept of the family farm had changed from "forty acres and a mule" to annual sales of $10,000 a year.

Our concept of the family farm must change with the times, Dr. Bishop answered. We used to measure the size of farms in the South by mules--you used to have a one or two-mule farm. Later we defined by size—a farm was so many acres. And today, we must speak in terms of gross sales, remembering that the minimum supportable level varies

with the location and type of farming operation. It is still possible, however, to use the definition of a family farm adopted in the 1930's: a farm large enough and productive enough to keep one family gainfully and productively employed. Whether we then became specific in terms of mules or dollars of sales, this is still our goal.

FAYETTE COUNTY, TENNESSEE

One county's experience in rural development

Fayette and Haywood Counties achieved national prominence in 1960 when 700 sharecroppers and tenant farmer families received eviction notices as the result of a voter-registration drive. Such economic reprisals have been widespread in the South and lend greater significance to Fayette County's experience.

Dr. C. G. Gomillion, Chairman of the Social Science Division at Tuskegee Institute, Alabama, chaired the panel. It included Fay Bennett, Executive Secretary of the National Sharecroppers Fund, Allen Yancey, Jr., President of the West Tennessee Development Company of Fayette County, Tennessee, and John H. Myhre, Operations Specialist of the Rural Electrification Administration.

The role of the Sharecroppers Fund, as a non-governmental private agency, in helping local development groups benefit from federal rural development programs, was explained by Miss Bennett.

The NSF was organized more than twenty-five years ago by such outstanding leaders as Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt and Dr. Frank P. Graham, when Southern sharecroppers were fighting to receive their fair share of New Deal benefits. Then, too, the "boss-man"—plantation owner or large farmer—was receiving his federal subsidy, or "plow-up money" that Dr. Jones mentioned, and the NSF worked to assure that low-income farmers were not left out. Our current program, in addition to our concern for migratory farm workers, many of whom are former sharecroppers, is to help those farm families that need help most, to share in federal programs designed to aid them. We are working to make these domestic "Point Four" programs a reality.

The work that Allen Yancey has done in Fayette County is an example of what can be done by working quietly and consistently, according to Miss Bennett. After national attention was focused on the sharecropper evictions there, NSF went to work on a long-range project to provide economic security as a basis for future social progress.

Mr. Yancey then described the situation that led to the evictions. "There were no Negro lawyers or doctors in Fayette County. There were 28 one-teacher schools. The white leadership sought to keep the county's 20,000 Negroes (of a total population of 30,000) living in poverty and without political power, and economic pressure was forcing many residents to seek work in the cities. We younger people felt that a voter

registration drive was the only way in which we could make progress toward a better life. But, Mr. Yancey explained, "our efforts met strong resistance from white county officials, and the slowness of the Justice Department to act in upholding our rights led to the mass evictions of January, 1961. [Eventually the Justice Department won a court case proving that the evictions resulted from the voter registration drive and were not simply caused by mechanization of the farms.] With hundreds of people living in surplus army tents, many unions and church groups responded with material emergency aid, and finally a federal injunction halted further evictions."

The NSF program in Fayette County began in June, 1961, when a meeting was arranged with John A. Baker in the Deparment of Agriculture to discuss how existing federal programs such as FHA loans, and new ones such as the recently enacted ARA, could benefit poor farm families in areas like Fayette County, Mr. Yancey reported.

"Following this meeting, I became NSF's Tennessee representative to work on a pilot project in my area. Our plan was to determine whether the programs could be made to work in the area, and, if so, to broaden NSF assistance to other needy counties of the rural South."

Mr. Yancey then listed the steps taken in the Fayette County project, stressing that they suggest a plan that other local groups can follow if they adapt it to their own circumstances.

1. The first and immediate problem faced was the county welfare officials' withdrawal of federal surplus food distribution from needy families. After several fruitless meetings with these officials, Mr. Yancey became convinced that the food distribution had been halted because of the voter registration drive. He protested directly to Secretary of Agriculture Freeman, and NSF and other groups backed his demand

that the federal government distribute the food on an emergency basis. The protest was heeded, and federal officials were sent to Fayette and Haywood counties to handle distribution. More than 4,000 needy families have received this food to date. Further protests to the government on its hiring practices resulted in employment of Negroes in both clerical and manual jobs associated with the food distribution.

2. Mr. Yancey spoke to many church, civic, and student groups in the area, informing them about government loans for farming and education and welfare aid. He then helped residents to prepare applications for student loans, Aid to Dependent Children programs, and the various FHA programs. He followed up applications that had been denied, kept records, and was instrumental in having many applications approved.

3. Evidence was gathered showing that applications from Negroes were not receiving equal consideration by the local FHA office. This information was sent to Washington and resulted in an investigation of the local office. A special registrar was sent to Haywood County. In one week he accepted more than 100 FHA loan applications from Negro farmers who previously had been discouraged from going to the local FHA office.

4. In July, 1961, NSF asked the ARA to declare both Fayette and Haywood counties eligible for ARA assistance as depressed rural areas. Fayette County was one of the first counties so designated under the new rural development program and became eligible to apply for industrial loans, retraining projects, and public works grants.

5. Mr. Yancey immediately approached white leaders in Fayette County to urge that they work together to take advantage of this new program for the benefit of all of the county's residents. Mr. Yancey related that he told the county judge:

> "I want to be a good citizen of Fayette County. Instead of fighting we should sit down and work together to develop new jobs and make the area prosperous. We want to establish a bi-racial committee to administer this new program, but if the white leadership won't cooperate, we shall go ahead on our own."

6. After several more meetings (held outside the county), the white leaders agreed to establish a nine-man ARA committee composed of four Negroes, four whites, and a chairman, who would be voteless, to be elected from either race. There was then a three-month wait, but still no meeting of this proposed ARA committee was held.

7. When it became clear that the white leadership was not willing to work with Mr. Yancey and his group, NSF asked for a meeting between members of the Yancey group and ARA officials in Washington. A bi-racial group from the county met with federal officials in Washington in early November, 1961. They asked that they be recognized as a

"can do" local ARA committee since the white leadership, which included all county and town officials, didn't seem interested in rural development. As a first step, they asked for technical assistance in surveying their assets and needs and in determining which industries would be most suitable to establish in Fayette County with ARA financial assistance.

As a result of the meeting, RAD agencies were instructed to cooperate with the group, and the Rural Electrification Administration was delegated responsibility for giving the group technical aid.

8. "A few days after we returned to Fayette, the county judge announced the appointment of an all-white ARA committee. He had been granted authority to do this, according to routine practice, by the governor of Tennessee. Naturally we felt very discouraged, but nevertheless we put in a formal request for technical aid."

9. The first representatives of REA were sent to Fayette in February, 1962, for preliminary meetings with the local REA borrowers and the "official" white ARA Committee.

10. "In April, REA sent its Operations Specialist, John Myhre, to meet with us. We discussed the economic situation of our area and all the problems facing us. After returning to Washington and giving the problems full study, Mr. Myhre recommended that a metal-plating plant would be ideally suited for the area and contacted a plating company in Memphis which was planning an expansion of its operations. He also recommended that we incorporate our local committee."

Thus when one local committee (the all-white one, appointed by the county judge) failed to take any action, federal agencies were able to cooperate with a locally constituted committee which was acting.

11. In May, the West Tennessee Development Company was incorporated and began work with Mr. Myhre on the loan application for the plating plant. At the same time, ARA recognized the all-white local committee with the understanding that it would approve any loan applications which were prepared with federal technical assistance.

12. The loan application was completed in August and quickly approved by both local and state ARA committees. It arrived in Washington in September and has received preliminary approval. The proposal asks for a $350,000 ARA industrial loan to construct and equip a metal plating plant that will provide jobs for 200 full-time workers within its first year of operation. The West Tennessee Development Company is now raising the $55,000 of local financing (10 per cent of the total investment) required by the ARA, and the remainder will be invested by the plating company. The local group is raising these funds by selling interest-bearing shares at $5.00 each. The plating company will eventually repay this $55,000, with interest, to the Development Company.

In conclusion, Mr. Yancey said that many federal programs appear very good on paper, but their local impact varies widely. "By showing the obstacles we have had to overcome in Fayette County, however, I hope I have demonstrated what can be done by local groups, the federal government, and private organizations working together."

"To bring new jobs"

John H. Myhre, Operations Specialist for the Rural Electrification Administration, explained the type of federal technical assistance that Mr. Yancey's group had received through the office of Rural Areas Development.

"The particular function that my group in REA performs is the development of industrial projects in rural areas served by REA electrical co-ops, which are in most areas of the rural South. Our concern is to bring new jobs into declining rural areas. It is a big job, because we know that 50 million acres will be taken out of farming in the next ten years, and that only one out of seven farm youths will be able to earn a living from the land. I myself am in the field of industrial engineering, and am interested in developing new industrial jobs on an objective, sound, businesslike basis for all workers regardless of race."

He first went to Fayette County to study its general economic situation, Mr. Myhre explained; next, to propose the most suitable type of industry; and finally, to try to attract a specific plant to the area. He worked closely with Mr. Yancey's development committee during the entire process, and advised them on what steps they should take.

"I found that the type of employment that Fayette County needed was large-scale employment to provide steady incomes for unemployed and underemployed Negro males. I found that three factories operating in the county were employing about 500 white women, of whom there was a shortage. So white women had to be imported from neighboring Mississippi, which I consider a very unfavorable employment pattern. There was a shortage of labor in every category except Negro males.

"Financing in west Tennessee is geared to agriculture, not industry. Memphis banks make loans on the cotton crop and do not have the reserves to finance new industry. I have found this situation in most areas of the rural South, and it is one reason why federal financing under ARA is an important factor there.

"As Mr. Yancey has explained, I found the county closely controlled by about five persons, none of whom appeared very interested in new jobs. But I also found several favorable factors there: Fayette has a good market location and high labor productivity."

After studying the overall situation, Mr. Myhre found that a metal-plating plant would be suitable for the area. "It was a big job to find a plant willing to go into a depressed rural area, but we found it with the help of the Factory Locating Service of Memphis. This plating com-

pany is a bi-racial employer at its present plant, and agreed to hire workers regardless of race in Fayette County. Since Negro workers are the only group readily available there, it sounded like an ideal opportunity for Mr. Yancey's group."

Mr. Myhre was glad to report that the ARA had told him that the Fayette County project was "as good a proposal as has ever been submitted to us." The loan application has now been turned over to the Small Business Administration for closing.

"Where do we go from here?" Mr. Myhre asked in conclusion. "One plant will not solve all the economic problems of Fayette County. But one new plant will be a stimulus for others to locate there. The first is always the hardest." Neighboring Haywood County has just been declared eligible for ARA aid, Mr. Myhre reported, and he has already met with a local group similar to Mr. Yancey's to discuss development possibilities there. He closed by saying that REA is prepared to offer its technical assistance to all eligible groups who request it.

> "We prefer that a fully representative bi-racial local committee administer local projects, and that local financing be done through county industrial bond issues. But if that is not possible, as it was not in Fayette, we shall work with those who do want to move forward and create new jobs and a higher standard of living for the area's families."

FROM THE FLOOR

"They want to stay . . ."

Discussion following the panel's presentation centered on the need to keep industrial development in the rural South separate from civil rights and voter registration movements, necessary as these are.

"The Fayette program demonstrated that NSF brought together the desire of local residents for new jobs and the technical and financial aid of the federal government," an educator commented, "but it would have been more difficult if civil rights had been a major and public issue."

"Although Fayette County received publicity at the time of the evictions, the NSF's long-range program was undertaken without outside publicity." the Sharecroppers Fund representative pointed out.

A representative of the neighboring Haywood County Civic and Welfare League stated that he had learned a good deal from the discussion that could be applied in his county. "We are still facing a major crisis in our area," he said, "for our farm people are still being pushed off the land, and no other jobs are open to them. Haywood County has 23,000 persons, of whom 15,000 are Negroes and 72 per cent are farmers. They want to stay in Haywood County, not go to Chicago, so I hope we will be able to bring new jobs through the ARA program."

A representative of Operation Freedom stated: "I have heard federal officials say many times that they can do nothing until local law

enforcement has completely broken down and I am concerned about the obvious dangers of such a policy." Federal legal and economic aid must be granted to Southern areas before, not after, violence has occurred, he concluded.

Mr. Myhre closed the discussion with a summary of what steps local groups should take in their communities:

1. *organize, if possible, a bi-racial local development group representing a broad alliance of labor, business, farm, and civic interests;*
2. *try to expand the local committee into a county-wide group;*
3. *request technical assistance from RAD or ARA for a study of industrial potential;*
4. *work hard to bring in the new industry and raise the local financing required.*

THE ROLE OF PRIVATE ORGANIZATIONS: CO-OPS, UNIONS, SELF-HELP

"We can progress together . . ."

Panel members for the discussion on the role of private organizations included Paul R. Christopher, Director of Region VIII (Tennessee and Kentucky), AFL-CIO; H. L. Mitchell, International Representative of the Amalgamated Meat Cutters and Butcher Workmen, AFL-CIO, in Lake Charles, Louisiana; W. Judson King, President-Treasurer of Franklinton Center; and Courtney Siceloff, Director of Penn Community Services, Frogmore, South Carolina. Milton Ogle, Community Development Counselor, Council of the Southern Mountains, served as chairman.

Low-income families and union members of the area have a common cause and common enemies, the AFL-CIO director stated, in opening the discussion with the role of labor unions in the development of the rural South. "The labor movement is based on the principle that as long as some workers live in poverty and without freedom, union members cannot be secure or free themselves," he stated.

"One of the themes of this conference is discrimination, and we of the labor movement have also lived with discrimination since the day we started to organize workers. Rural people working for economic development and freedom are our allies and we have everything to gain by working together.

"While the labor movement welcomes your efforts to bring new jobs to rural areas of the South, we do have one additional concern. This is that nine out of ten plants that have recently been established in the South are non-union, and in fact many of them have moved from other sections of the country where unions are strong.

"To be frank, the labor movement in the rural South is weaker than in any other section of the country. But in many small towns we may have a local or two. If you want their help in rural development, you must ask them. Some will not cooperate, we know, but others will, and the higher up you go for aid from labor, the better your chances of success. We can and should progress together, and I urge you to try to do so in your communities. For the labor movement is people, like yourselves, banded together to work for dignity, economic security, and freedom for all."

Mr. H. L. Mitchell, of the Amalgamated Meat Cutters union, was among the original founders of the Southern Tenant Farmers Union, which was organized by eighteen white and Negro sharecroppers in Arkansas in 1934. For many years he was President of the Union, until it merged with the Meat Cutters in 1960.

"I have seen many changes occur in the rural areas of the South during these 25 years. . . . Farms have grown larger, and machines are supplanting men in many areas. But strong organization among remaining farmers and farm workers is still the basic solution to their low-income problems and to obtaining the education and skills necessary to secure industrial jobs."

Mr. Mitchell then described the situation where he has been working to organize farm workers—rice workers near Crowley and Lake Charles, Louisiana, and sugar cane workers in the same general area. The fact that many of these workers are now becoming machine operators rather than hand laborers makes them more likely to be organized, he feels.

The Reverend W. Judson King, President of Franklinton Center, described it as a rural center for farm families, supported by the United Church of Christ. "It would seem to me that the role of private organizations in promoting a better life for farm families is manyfold," Dr. King said.

> "Among them are these: initiator, experimenter, gadfly, disturber, critical cooperator, and an institutional focus for the fellowship and work of people of good will. One cannot but observe how deadening the experience of isolation is for those who concern themselves with opening doors of opportunity to those in ignorance and deprivation. So this work of affording an opportunity for those of like mind to know each other and to consult and plan together is, perhaps, not the least important of the many roles that a private organization can play. To the degree that such an agency is free from pressures, and is willing to endure being both unpopular and resented, will its effectiveness be determined.
>
> "The more definitely an institution works with oppressed color minorities, the more delicate and complicated the task becomes. All of the handicaps that any depressed minority suffers are there, and high visibility underscores the Negro handicap. He cannot hide in the crowd and is therefore open for reprisal. It happens now that the so-called "New Negro" domi-

nates the stage of action. This group has no faith in patient waiting, and the technique of servile persuasion is obnoxious to them. Thus one is moved to ask himself some questions when he considers beginning a project. Does this particular project offer opportunity for finding and developing grass roots leadership? What chance has it to deliver on the hopes that it inspires? How costly will possible failure be?

"Often when the day seems lost one makes the heartening discovery that there are unexpected forces fighting with and for the same cause that he has espoused."

Dr. King concluded with a brief account of the services offered by Franklinton Center. In addition to providing accommodations for meetings such as this one and for summer camps, it is a focus for many ongoing activities for the residents of the surrounding area. Among these are religious services and regular social gatherings, as well as educational courses for both young people and adults and assistance in cooperative efforts among the farmers of the area.

Mr. Courtney Siceloff, its Director, described the work of Penn Community Services at Frogmore, South Carolina, which is similar to that of Franklinton Center.

In the summer of 1960, Penn Community Services brought together a group of national consultants to make recommendations on what private agencies could do to improve human relations in rural areas. The consultants reported that a primary need in South Carolina was for a fact-finding and publication project pointing out areas of discrimination in the fields of education, employment, and public services and facilities. Another recommendation was to set up a pilot project in Beaufort County. In implementing that recommendation, Penn now employs a field director to assist the people of rural communities to assess their needs and to work together to bring about the desired changes. The three-year Beaufort County Pilot Project, now in its second year, places emphasis on practical problems of health, sanitation, and adult education, with a long-range goal of developing responsible local leadership and self-reliant citizens.

Penn today is many things, Mr. Siceloff reported, as it seeks to capitalize on the opportunities for extending liberty in a rapidly changing South. Penn is a community center and a meeting place for people of St. Helena Island. It offers opportunities for the exchange of ideas and information on subjects ranging from crop rotation to voting; cultural and recreational activities; facilities for a day nursery, a library, cooperative marketing, and health clinics.

RURAL DEVELOPMENT FOR ALL THE PEOPLE

"Moving with the grain of history . . ."

John A. Baker, Assistant Secretary of Agriculture in charge of the Rural Areas Development program, delivered the major address of the conference.

"Planning for the people" is the concern of the present administration, he said, explaining its general approach to the problems of the nation's farm families. It is his conviction that every federal program should be open to everyone eligible. "No one should be penalized just because he was born in western Arkansas or as the son of a sharecropper."

But, he added, it is not enough to state such a policy. For as everyone here knows, the federal programs have not always functioned properly in the past.

Some of the practical steps taken by the U.S. Department of Agriture to expand and invigorate its services were outlined by Mr. Baker. He listed the programs that had been described earlier by the Rural Areas Development and Area Redevelopment Administration conference panels, and then added that a new rural renewal program had just been inaugurated. This new program is to function similarly to the urban renewal program, except that it will be planned by the people living in renewal areas for their own benefit.

The results of the new policy to give better USDA service to all farm families vary from state to state, he added. "New leadership in the Extension Service has just been appointed, and in some states, old

John A. Baker
Assistant Secretary of Agriculture

leadership has been replaced by new, forward-looking personnel. In short, although we still face major problems, I think we've begun to move."

Secretary Baker then announced that an "Equal Opportunities Unit" (tentative designation) has been established in the Office of Rural Areas Development. It is headed by Dean L. A. Potts of the Tuskegee Institute's School of Agriculture, and a co-director, who will be white, will be selected on the recommendation of the National Advisory Committee on RAD. Harry Bass and other agency officials will be members of this unit, whose primary responsibility will be to develop programs for adoption by the USDA to insure that federal aid for farm families will be given on an equal basis to all eligible persons.

> "It will be the agency that most of you at this conference will be concerned with, and I urge you to offer any suggestions you may have to Dean Potts and his colleagues. I realize that minority groups that have been discriminated against in our society require extra attention so that they will receive equal opportunities, and this new unit is going to see to it that we make those extra efforts."

In closing, Assistant Secretary Baker said that the movement for equal opportunities in the rural South is "moving with the grain of history, and our policies, if they are to succeed, must move in the same direction. And if we are stubborn enough, and determined enough, the power structure we have been discussing at this conference will eventually get on the bandwagon of history."

From the floor

Discussion from the floor following Secretary Baker's address focused on the operations of the new "Equal Opportunities Unit" in the RAD.

Several persons, including Dean Potts and Dr. Jones, commented that throughout the conference the major unanswered question was, how do we get the information to the people? How can we set a new pattern in motion within federal rural programs in the South? It was generally agreed that these questions should get top priority in the new USDA unit on equal opportunity.

Several farmers, including one from Mississippi, stated that Secretary Baker's talk had given them, in the words of one, "the chance to exercise some more patience—which after so many years of unfair treatment I had just about lost."

Dr. Hollis Price of LeMoyne College, chairman of this session, concluded that the most significant thing Secretary Baker had said was: "These federal programs are the response of our democratic government to the expressed needs of the people. If the programs are imposed from above, they will fail. But with planning in the spirit that Secretary Baker has shown, they will most certainly succeed."

STATE DELEGATIONS

Optimism . . . and urgency

Each afternoon of the conference, meetings of state groups were held. The following state delegations met regularly to discuss their special problems and to make plans for future work to help local farm families: North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Mississippi, Louisiana, and Georgia-Alabama. The final session of the conference heard their reports on how they intend to carry on the work of this conference after returning to their communities.

Mississippi

Mississippi, which next to North Carolina itself had the largest single delegation, reported through Robert Moses, its chairman, and the Rev. Shirley Greene, a resource leader who met with the state delegation.

Two major themes, according to Mr. Greene, ran through the discussions of the Mississippi delegation, which was made up primarily of farmers and sharecroppers: an optimism, generated by the discussions of the conference, for the eventual effectiveness of the new federal programs for rural areas; but along with this, the question of "whether we can survive until these programs go into effect at our level."

There was agreement that farmers want to stay in Mississippi, but on the other hand a feeling that unless conditions improve quickly and dramatically, they will not be able to find work near their homes and will be forced to migrate. There was also agreement that their basic problem was economic, but that it was related to the lack of civil rights.

As an example, one delegate, a day laborer on plantations, was unable to find work after he registered to vote. Another instance was the cancellation of an ARA tractor training project last year that would have retrained about 1,200 farm workers to operate farm machinery: the delegation expressed the view that this project was killed by the white power structure which objected to federal aid which would have increased Negro wage rates and skills.

The most impressive thing about the Mississippi delegation, Mr. Greene concluded, was the level of immediacy that it brought to the conference: these farmers came here not to discuss on an abstract level, but because they needed help, desperately and immediately. "I feel I can speak for the conference as a whole when I say that their presence has given us the determination to do everything we can to help them help themselves."

This Mississippi delegation has decided to work for and to hold a conference similar to this one for about 200 Mississippi farmers, Robert Moses announced. He said that one thing other conference participants could do to help was to offer suggestions to the Reverand L. T. Smith, 1072 Lynch Street, Jackson, Mississippi, as to any local white persons in the state who would help with such a conference. With such a meeting, Mr. Moses said, work could begin in rural areas to organize RAD committees.

Louisiana

Mr. Ocie Lee Smith reported for the chairman, Rev. A. J. McKnight, that many meetings would be planned in that state to spread the news about ARA and RAD. Among these will be meetings among the various rural cooperatives in Father McKnight's area to give information about federal programs and to organize local groups to carry out the necessary work at the grass roots level. [As we go to press, we learn that a representative of the ARA in Washington, as well as the Louisiana State Coordinator from Baton Rouge, attended a meeting in New Iberia where they showed a movie describing the Area Redevelopment Act and explained the various steps necessary to qualify under the law.]

North Carolina

A report of conclusions was submitted by Mr. I. H. Hilliard for the delegation:

1. Interested citizens should approach official government and private agencies for help in bringing more industry to their local areas.

2. A high-level conference with the Governor's representative should be sought to help outline a program of approach, so that all segments of the population will be effectively reached and afforded the opportu-

nity to improve their economic condition. This conference will include all who are interested and who are capable of making honest contributions to a Program of Area Development.

3. Local initiative should be encouraged in approaching the problem from the local point of view, where people so affected might get together and begin some small industry to give local employment, increasing the income of both those unemployed and those with marginal employment.

4. We should explore and initiate the community development idea where area leaders meet local people to offer expert guidance, identify and assess conditions, help them set forth goals and objectives, and assist them in establishing a plan of action toward achieving these goals and objectives.

5. Because of the low level of education of the people we have to work with and the great numbers of uninformed people in many areas, we propose to use the discussion leaflet technique as a means of informing and educating people about the problems and the procedures that offer the best chance for a solution.

6. A program should be set up to help bring about more knowledge of and encourage participation in the industrial training centers already established in the state of North Carolina, with special reference to Negro youth.

7. We should work to encourage and improve the educational training of adults and out-of-school youth through basic education, which is a prerequisite for training people for skilled industrial employment. Institutions and competent individuals could arrange some type of instruction to help the youth make an adequate impression when applying for jobs.

8. Adult education facilities already existing in the state—for example, A. & T. College, North Carolina State College, and The Adult Education Association—should be approached for counsel and help.

9. An inventory of skills of people should be made for use by appropriate groups, for promotional purposes. Such an inventory should be done by the people themselves.

Georgia-Alabama-Virginia

Dr. Manet Fowler, in the absence of Mrs. Septima Clark, delivered the report of the joint Georgia-Alabama delegation, which also included

several participants from Virginia.

On the question of the ARA program in relation to civil rights, the delegation agreed that the issue should not be evaded, especially by church leaders entrusted with moral leadership. The delegation also agreed that an important obstacle to adequate communication between government agencies and the people, and consequently between government policies and local action, lies in the nature of the educational material produced by the government. To be effective, information must be written simply and clearly enough for the people to understand it.

The delegation expressed great interest in the retraining programs discussed at the conference, and many asked about opportunities in their communities. It was also reported that out-migration had taken many important local leaders away from rural areas in recent years, and that new leaders must be found to participate in rural development.

In evaluating the conference, Dr. Fowler reported that perhaps not enough practical knowledge had been received, although a major contribution was the stimulating of government personnel to work harder on the problems of the rural South.

Tennessee

Currie Boyd reported for the Tennessee delegation, which discussed practical steps to be taken by Haywood County. They recommended the following: that Haywood proceed along the lines of Fayette County, as reported by Mr. Yancey; that a leather goods plant and a food-processing plant be the first industries proposed to ARA for Haywood County; that persons be encouraged to register at the local Employment Service offices for retraining programs; that surplus food be requested from local officials when needed—if not granted, then broadly based appeals be sent to state officials and, if necessary, to the Secretary of Agriculture.

Mr. Boyd mentioned that a supermarket had already been constructed in Haywood County, in addition to the establishment of a handicraft tote-bag project. These developments, in addition to newly felt voting strength, are leading toward a new day for Haywood County. This shows what can be done by local people when they work together, Mr. Boyd concluded.

South Carolina

Alice Spearman gave the report for the South Carolina delegation, which made plans for carrying on the work of the conference through a state meeting on federal programs for rural South Carolina, to be held at Penn Community Services at Frogmore, South Carolina. There are twenty-two 5(b) counties (eligible as depressed areas) in the state,

and only one, Chesterfield County, has a Negro representative on a local committee. The meeting in Frogmore will spread information on programs and procedures in much the same way as this conference has done.

The delegation also reported that in South Carolina a need exists for more legislative action to combat discrimination in employment. It also agreed that the services of a full-time field worker to work with local groups, as Mr. Yancey has done in Tennessee, would be most valuable.

SUMMARY

"We have the tools . . ."

The Reverend Shirley Greene, Town and Country Secretary, United Church of Christ, summarized the conference discussions. He said that Franklinton Center had been an ideal setting for the conference, situated as it is in farming country where many of the farm families about whom this conference was concerned lived and worked, and dedicated as it is to helping these families achieve a better life. In addition, the timing was right, and John Baker epitomized the new sense of opportunity that USDA is working toward. "What a frustrating experience it would have been to have met three years ago," he said.

The participants themselves, however, had more to do with the success of the conference than any other factor.

> "We have entered into a real dialogue between the professionals and the farm families. We dealt with the most important problem in America today: the problem of persistent poverty for which there is no excuse in our affluent society. We know how to provide a better life for farm families and we have the resources and technology to do it. We have the tools to eliminate poverty in America. It is immoral that we allow it to continue.
>
> "The real experts at this conference were the farm people themselves.

They have lived with poverty each day of their lives, and we got their message. I suspect we understood them better than they understood us."

Mr. Greene then presented some of his own thoughts on what the conference had concluded: First, that a better life for farm families means more than economic opportunities. It also means education, organization, and perhaps most importantly, civil rights. For even when many new jobs have been developed in rural areas, if Negroes are not given the opportunity to take these new jobs, then there have been no economic opportunities created as far as the majority of the people who need help are concerned. "This is controversial, of course," Mr. Greene added, "but the entire conference has reflected this controversy and has been the better for it."

Today, our political problems perhaps overshadow our economic ones, he suggested. We have the economic resources but we can't seem to distribute them as equally as we should. "The 'power structures' that have played such an important role in our discussion will, I think, always exist in some degree, but I think that history shows that the power of the people can influence the leaders." Mr. Greene concluded:

"We have heard of the tools and resources that are on our side, not only the various federal programs, but also unions, schools, churches, and co-ops. Our goal is no less than the total mobilization of all these resources for a better life for farm families."

Fay Bennett
Executive Secretary
National Sharecroppers Fund

Where to obtain further information

Each section of this report has suggested ways in which rural people can seek federal aid, and has mentioned most of the main agencies and programs concerned with rural development.

Further information about the Farmers Home Administration and applications for FHA loans may be obtained from your local County Agent. Your County Agent can also tell you whether your county is eligible for ARA projects and how a local group may apply. Any rural county is eligible for RAD projects, and your County Agent should help your group to determine feasible projects.

Information about other services of the U.S. Department of Agriculture is available from your County Agent. Inquiries about vocational training programs may be made at your local employment office.

If you are unable to obtain the information and advice you seek locally, you may write to the heads of these programs in Washington. They are listed below. In writing, be as specific as you can, whether requesting information, advice, or administrative review of local decisions.

L. A. POTTS
Special Ass't to the Secretary
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Room 226 W, Administration Bldg.
Washington 25, D. C.

A. T. MACE, Director
Office of Rural Areas Development
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Washington 25, D. C.

JOHN M. LOVORN, Director
Rural Renewal Division
Farmers Home Administration
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Washington 25, D. C.

JOB K. SAVAGE, Director
Management Services Division
Farmer Cooperative Service
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Washington 25, D. C.

GEORGE H. ROBINSON
Special Ass't. for Community Org.
Area Redevelopment Administration
U.S. Department of Commerce
Washington 25, D. C.

ANNE GOULD
Training Coordinator
Area Redevelopment Administration
U.S. Department of Commerce
Washington 25, D. C.

LAWRENCE O. HOUSTOUN, JR.
Chief, Div. of Special Group Activities
Office of Manpower, Automation and Training
U.S. Department of Labor
Room 2811, GAO Building
Washington 25, D. C.

You may also write to Fay Bennett, Executive Secretary, National Sharecroppers Fund, 112 East 19th Street, New York 3, N.Y., for additional information and help.

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Literature Service

Check quantities desired. While the service is free, your contribution to help meet printing and mailing costs will be appreciated.

.....A BETTER LIFE FOR FARM FAMILIES. A report on the proceedings of a Southern rural conference sponsored by the NSF.

.....THE CONDITION OF FARM WORKERS IN 1962. A 5-page annual report by Fay Bennett, Executive Secretary of the National Sharecroppers Fund.

.....SHARECROPPERS IN THE 60's. A report and a program on current conditions in the South, by the National Sharecroppers Fund. 20 pages.

.....THE SOUTH'S REVOLUTION: CHALLENGE TO THE NATION. A brief, illustrated folder on the extent and implications of the agricultural revolution in the South.

.....THE FORGOTTEN PEOPLE. Summary of a series of articles from the *New York World-Telegram and Sun* by Dale Wright, describing his experiences as a migrant, and giving a first-hand report on migrants' working and living conditions. 6 pages, illustrated.

.....THE MIGRATORY FARM LABOR PROBLEM IN THE UNITED STATES. Set of two recent reports by the Senate Subcommittee on Migratory Labor, containing detailed information on migrant labor and proposed legislation. 56 and 78 pages.

.....REPORT ON FARM LABOR. Summary of Public Hearing held by the National Advisory Committee on Farm Labor in Washington, D.C. 40 pages, illustrated.

.....THE POSITION OF FARM WORKERS IN FEDERAL AND STATE LEGISLATION. By Robin Myers. A 52-page study published by the National Advisory Committee on Farm Labor, documenting the exclusion of farm workers from social and economic legislation.

.....END CHILD LABOR NOW! The working and living conditions of migrant children, described in a reprint from *Good Housekeeping* magazine. By A. E. Farrell; illustrated.

Name.....Street.....

City.....Zone.....State.....

Organization.....